

Mail safety and supporting our troops



Restrictions on mail right now because of concerns about anthrax shouldn't stop you from talking to your lawmakers or supporting our local troops overseas.

To contact your lawmakers (in Olympia or Washington, D.C.), try e-mail or postcards.

The Pentagon suspended "Operation Dear Abby" and other programs where people wrote letters to those serving overseas. Instead, the Pentagon asks that people can show their support of local troops by volunteering at a local veterans' hospital or in the community. You can find a guide

to volunteer opportunities in King County at:

<http://www.metrokc.gov/volunteer.htm>

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

Keeping in Touch

Hotline:

800-562-6000

Hearing impaired:

800-635-9993

Olympia office:

341 JLOB
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
360-786-7822
Fax: 360-786-7317

E-mail:

ruderman_la@leg.wa.gov

Home page:

http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/members/d45_2.htm

House of Representatives

<http://www.leg.wa.gov>

State web page

<http://access.wa.gov>

**Representative
Laura Ruderman
45th District**
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



**2001
Fall
Report**



Representative
Laura Ruderman
45th District
2001 Fall Report

Dear neighbors,

As our country is under attack by terrorism, it's more important than ever to cherish our Constitution and democracy.

There's nothing more fundamental to self-government than the right of citizens to be informed about, and involved in, the decisions that affect us all.

Our state faces unique challenges, and it's important that your voice is heard on these issues:

- Traffic gridlock is choking the Puget Sound; it's robbing us of jobs and of time with our families. Ten years of neglect have only made gridlock worse.
- We must guard against terrorism at home, support our brave troops overseas — and make sure that all citizens, regardless of race or religion, feel safe and welcome here.
- Thousands of workers and their families face layoffs before Christmas, and each worker needs new opportunities for work so they can pay the mortgage and feed their families.

I spend a lot of time talking to citizens, and I agree with people who want solutions. Now isn't the time to get lost in a debate over details. When a patient with a heart attack rolls into the ER, the doctors don't argue about what to do. They get to work.

Traffic gridlock, the poor economy and terrorism are serious problems that deserve serious solutions. No more studies, political posturing or excuses. It's time to bridge political differences and get things done for the people of this state. I believe our citizens are up to any challenge.

As always, I welcome comments, questions and ideas from the citizens I represent. There's nothing more important to me than hearing directly from you.

Sincerely,

Laura Ruderman, Kirkland

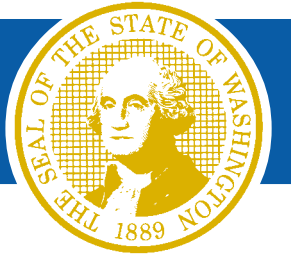
341 John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
360-786-7822

Hotline: 1-800-562-6000
www.leg.wa.gov/house/ruderman_la@leg.wa.gov

Committees: Vice chair, Technology, Telecommunications and Energy; Health Care; Appropriations



Rep. Laura Ruderman • 45th District



Opportunity

Boeing layoffs get headlines and time on the TV news, but workers in other industries are also hurting.

- Many families had their savings invested in the stock market, which plummeted after Sept. 11;
- Technology companies are facing a worldwide slump;
- Every job in manufacturing or technology supports two or three jobs in the service sector. Mass layoffs trickle down to restaurants, hardware stores and shops.

We need to be good neighbors to laid-off workers. They need a hand up, not a hand out. The good news is our state has one of the best retraining programs in the nation. The bad news is not all workers are eligible to train for a new career.

It's the right thing to retrain workers, encourage people to start new businesses, and offer incentives for companies to create new jobs.

Our state needs to do a better job of making it easier to start a business, get permits, and deal with the paperwork.



We've taken some steps to make things simpler and quicker, but there's more to do to help entrepreneurs get off the ground and succeed.

America is known as the land of opportunity and prosperity, as the place to come if you're hard-working and creative. Washington state is already home to innovative businesses like Microsoft, Boeing and Amazon.com; it's smart for us to attract and incubate other companies and business people with big ideas.

Community

No matter the challenge, the citizens of our nation have worked together and sacrificed to accomplish what seemed impossible: surviving the Great Depression, winning World War II, rebuilding Europe and Japan, landing a man on the moon, finding a peaceful solution to the Cold War.

We're at our best when we recognize that there's something greater than ourselves. When we have a feeling of community and unity.

However, there are times we have lost that feeling and have become focused inward.

People are moving more and more because of their jobs, so much so that some people have boxes they never unpack and neighbors they never get to know.

This feeling of isolation, this loss of community, feeds cynicism and crime. It's easier to be impolite or cruel to people you never expect to see again.

This is the time to reach out to others, and to guard against paranoia, prejudice, and hate.

A good friend of mine from India wouldn't go outside alone for weeks after Sept. 11 because of how people stared at her. A man with a gun tried to burn down a north Seattle mosque, a cab driver was beaten at SeaTac, and another man in our area was attacked as he sat in his car simply because he wasn't white.

When the Legislature goes back in session, I'm sure we'll reform or toughen the state's laws against these kinds of assaults. And reforms are a good idea; we need to protect all citizens and battle harassment and hate wherever it exists.

Yet laws aren't the entire answer.

We're not here simply to fight traffic in the morning, work all day, battle traffic home, go to bed and do it all over again. A sense of community matters. As the world gets smaller and smaller, it's up to us to learn more and more about each other.

I hope you continue to reach out, to get to know your neighbors, and get involved in your community. It doesn't cost money to build community and unity — it's free, if we only invest a little time.

Responsibility

Tackling tough problems isn't easy. But it's the right thing to do. Leadership means finding solutions, however painful, instead of leaving festering problems for our children to solve.

Fixing problems today is also the smart thing to do, because little problems tend to snowball over time.

One example: traffic.

Gridlock on the highway, gridlock in Olympia

During the last 10 years, population in Washington state exploded. Did we invest any extra money for new roads and highways to handle that growth? No.

Transportation solutions got buried by political bickering. Instead of solutions, people who battle gridlock on I-405 every day get endless studies. Instead of new highways and cheap alternatives like vanpools, citizens get vague promises and excuses.

An issue like transportation should never have gotten so partisan.

No matter your political stripes, we all rely on the same highways, trains, and buses. I'm happy that most local legislators, Republican and Democrat, have worked for solutions. Now, legislators and citizens alike must pressure the political leadership to find a workable solution. Next session, the Legislature shouldn't go home without passing a plan to battle traffic gridlock.

